



THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

OGC 97-51395
2 June 1997

The Honorable James Cacheris
United States District Court for
the Eastern District of Virginia
Alexandria, Virginia

Dear Judge Cacheris:

I submit this statement to the Court on behalf of the victims of Harold J. Nicholson's espionage.

As Acting Director of Central Intelligence, I am responsible for providing the President national intelligence and for protecting intelligence sources and methods. As Acting Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, I am responsible for the welfare of the men and women who perform the work of the Agency. Mr. Nicholson's actions have seriously damaged my ability, and that of the United States Intelligence Community and the Central Intelligence Agency, to perform our mission, to protect our means of intelligence collection and to safeguard our people from harm.

First, I address the harm that Mr. Nicholson inflicted on the men and women who work for the Central Intelligence Agency and on the critical work that these public servants perform every day to accomplish the mission of the Agency. Mr. Nicholson betrayed his friends and colleagues and put their lives in danger. Mr. Nicholson revealed, or planned to reveal, the names and positions of a large number of CIA officers whose jobs depend on their ability to work clandestinely. Some of these officers can no longer perform certain important assignments for which they were trained. Several other officers, who were working under our deepest cover program, had to be withdrawn because their missions, as well as their lives, were at risk. Still other officers whose identities were revealed to the Russians by Mr. Nicholson were our young Career Trainees, many of whom were his own students. The course of many of these young officers' careers has been affected by Mr. Nicholson's treachery.

Second, we have now begun the long process of assessing in a comprehensive fashion the extent of the damage Mr. Nicholson's compromise of intelligence information to the Russians has caused. Even when this job is complete and

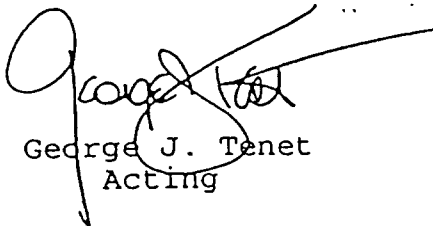
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Date JUL 1997

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the extent of the losses has been calculated to the best of our ability, there will remain uncertainty about the actual contribution these disclosures have made or will make to Russian intelligence operations. It is clear to me that the very uncertainty Mr. Nicholson's betrayal has caused will force the United States Intelligence Community and the Central Intelligence Agency to assume the worst possible outcome. We will have no choice but to cancel hitherto promising intelligence operations and to reassign intelligence officers performing important intelligence missions -- and we have already taken such steps. We will never be able to calculate fully the damage to the national security of this country caused by the loss to our senior policymakers of critical intelligence information that these canceled operations might have yielded.

I rely on the United States Attorney to represent the interests of the country at sentencing. Nonetheless, I could not fail to identify to the Court the real victims of Mr. Nicholson's crime. I have described the harm that Mr. Nicholson inflicted on his colleagues and on the mission of the CIA. Mr. Nicholson also betrayed his country. Ultimately, his victims are the citizens of the United States who have been denied the protection that prompt, accurate intelligence can provide to our leaders and to our diplomats and military forces overseas.

Sincerely,



George J. Tenet
Acting